

Appl. No. 10/811,696
Atty. Docket No. 9533
Amdt. dated March , 2006
Reply to Office Action of December 29, 2006
Customer No. 27752

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A unitary disposable absorbent article [[,]] extending along a longitudinal axis that extends through a first waist region, a second waist region, and a crotch region disposed between the first and second waist regions, the absorbent article comprising:

an absorbent core having a garment-facing surface and a body-facing surface;

a liquid permeable topsheet positioned adjacent said body-facing surface of said absorbent core;

a liquid impermeable backsheet positioned adjacent said garment-facing surface of said absorbent core; said backsheet having a physical variation ~~along at least one axis~~, wherein said physical variation defines a first backsheet zone and a second backsheet zone, ~~wherein said physical variation is a measurable difference~~, wherein said physical variation is as measured by a physical property selected from the group consisting of at least one of basis weight, thickness and density, such that an average of a given property of the crotch region differs from an average of the given property of at least one of the waist regions; and

at least one elastomeric element having at least one primary direction of stretch, said elastomeric element at least partially overlapping and joined to said second backsheet zone, wherein a relaxed pathlength of said elastomeric element in the primary direction of stretch is less than a total pathlength of said backsheet in the region of overlap.

2. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said axis is a longitudinal axis.

3. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 2 wherein said first backsheet zone and said second backsheet zone partially overlap said longitudinal axis.

4. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said axis is a lateral axis.

Appl. No. 10/811,696
Atty. Docket No. 9533
Amdt. dated March , 2006
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Customer No. 27752

5. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said article further comprises:

a front waist region;

a back waist region, said front and back waist regions being located at opposite ends of said article, said front and back waist regions generally encircling a waist of a wearer when said article is worn;

a crotch region, said crotch region being located intermediate to said front and back waist regions, said crotch region extending longitudinally between said front and back waist regions, said crotch region generally positioned between a pair of legs of a wearer; and

a buttocks region, said crotch region being located intermediate to said front and back waist regions, said buttocks region being located near a proximal end of said back waist region,

wherein said first backsheet zone is disposed primarily in said crotch region and said front waist region, wherein said second backsheet zone is at least partially disposed in said back waist region.

6. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said article further comprises:

a front waist region;

a back waist region, said front and back waist regions being located at opposite ends of said article, said front and back waist regions generally encircling a waist of a wearer when said article is worn;

a crotch region, said crotch region being located intermediate to said front and back waist regions, said crotch region extending longitudinally between said front and back waist regions, said crotch region generally positioned between a pair of legs of a wearer; and

a buttocks region, said crotch region being located intermediate to said front and back waist regions, said buttocks region being located near a proximal end of said back waist region,

wherein said first backsheet zone is disposed primarily in said crotch region and said front waist region, wherein said second backsheet zone is at least partially disposed in said buttocks region.

Appl. No. 10/811,696
Atty. Docket No. 9533
Amdt. dated March , 2006
Reply to Office Action of December 29, 2006
Customer No. 27752

7. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 6 wherein said elastomeric element is non-linear in shape.

8. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said physical variation is such that said second backsheet zone has a lower value than said first backsheet zone.

9. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said selected physical property is basis weight, wherein said physical variation is measured as a ratio such that said ratio of the basis weight of said second backsheet zone to the basis weight in said first backsheet zone is ~~at least 0.6~~ less than about 0.6.

10. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein a ratio of the relaxed pathlength of said elastomeric element to a total pathlength of said backsheet within said second backsheet zone in a joined area is less than about 0.8.

11. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 further comprising a third backsheet zone having a value for said physical property that is different than a corresponding value for said first and second backsheet zone.

12. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 11 wherein said physical variation is such that said third backsheet zone has a higher value than said first backsheet zone and said second backsheet zone.

13. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 11 wherein said physical variation is such that said third backsheet zone has a higher value than said first backsheet zone and a lower value than said second backsheet zone.

14. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 11 wherein said third backsheet zone is at least partially disposed in said front waist region.

Appl. No. 10/811,696
Atty. Docket No. 9533
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Customer No. 27752

15. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 11 wherein said third backsheet zone is at least partially disposed in said buttocks region.

16. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 11 wherein said third backsheet zone is at least partially disposed in said back waist region.

17. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 11 further comprising a second elastomeric element at least partially overlapping and joined to said third backsheet zone, wherein a relaxed pathlength of said elastomeric element in the primary direction of stretch is less than a total pathlength of said backsheet in the region of overlap.

18. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 17 wherein said second elastomeric element is non-linear.

19. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said article may be selected from the group consisting of a disposable diaper, a catamenial and an adult incontinence product.

20. (Original) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said disposable diaper is a pant.

21. (New) A unitary disposable absorbent article extending along a longitudinal axis that extends through a first waist region, a second waist region, and a crotch region disposed between the first and second waist regions, the absorbent article comprising:

an absorbent core having a garment-facing surface and a body-facing surface;

a liquid permeable topsheet positioned adjacent said body-facing surface of said absorbent core;

a liquid impermeable backsheet positioned adjacent said garment-facing surface of said absorbent core; said backsheet having a physical variation along at least one axis, wherein said physical variation defines a first backsheet zone and a second backsheet zone, wherein said physical variation is a measurable difference, wherein said physical variation is as measured by a physical property selected from the group consisting of basis weight, thickness and density; and

Appl. No. 10/811,696
Atty. Docket No. 9533
Amdt. dated March , 2006
Reply to Office Action of December 29, 2006
Customer No. 27752

at least one elastomeric element having at least one primary direction of stretch, said elastomeric element at least partially overlapping and joined to said second backsheet zone, wherein a relaxed pathlength of said elastomeric element in the primary direction of stretch is less than a total pathlength of said backsheet in the region of overlap, and wherein said at least one elastomeric element extends across the longitudinal axis.